

Steven Vago. *Law and Society*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1981, 352 pp., \$18.95 cloth.

Steven Vago's *Law and Society* discusses topics that are usually dealt with in most law and society books and some topics that are not. The book is primarily intended for undergraduate students in sociology, although it is not limited to them. The book attempts to analyze the relationship between law and society from a sociological perspective. Vago states the "aim of this book has been to further the understanding of the relationship between law and society by pulling together the major theoretical, empirical, analytical, and evaluative aspects of the sociological study of this relationship" (p. ix). The flow of the book seemed to be governed by two sociological conceptions of law in society: the integration-consensus and the conflict coercion perspectives (p. 12).

The first four chapters provide extensive information on the origin of law, theoretical perspectives on law, and how law is organized in society. Of these four chapters, the chapter discussing the origin of law is most important since it provides the reader with an abundance of information describing the reciprocal relationship between law and society. In this chapter, Vago addresses such issues as judicial lawmaking, which concerns the controversial issue of whether judges are makers of law or discoverers of law as well as influences on the lawmaking process such as interest groups, public opinion, and the media.

The next three chapters discuss law as an instrument of social control, as a method of conflict resolution and as an instrument of social change. In these three chapters Vago is able to show that law is functional in a society that is either of the integration-consensus type or of the conflict coercive type.

If Vago's book is primarily used by undergraduate students, it could serve as an excellent text for an introduction to the sociology of law. It provides the student unfamiliar with a sociological perspective with a comprehensive, thorough and descriptive view of our legal system. In addition, it provides them with the perspectives of many authors presently associated with the sociology of law.

However, readers who are knowledgeable might be apt to dismiss the book for going over old ground. This is probably attributable to the absence of a theoretical orientation that could have aided the flow and/or organization of the information presented.

Vago had hoped to provide a detailed sociological analysis of the relationship between law and society that he thought was often missing from law and society texts. I am of the opinion that he has come short in meeting this objective. Although the book lacks an adequate theoretical guide, it does provide an extensive descriptive discussion of law-society relations, and should prove an excellent introduction to the sociology of law for undergraduate students.

Washington University

Jessie L. Myles